

Desert tortoises retreat into shelters to avoid midday heat and to hibernate in the winter. • Hibernating desert tortoises slow their metabolism to minimize energy loss. • A female desert tortoise lays clutches of 1–15 eggs, usually from April to August. • Desert tortoise hatchlings are completely self-sufficient. • Desert tortoises are most active after rainfall.

Desert Tortoise



KEEP WILD TORTOISES WILD

Removing tortoises from the wild is illegal and depletes wild tortoise populations.

KEEP CAPTIVE TORTOISES CAPTIVE

Releasing captive tortoises into the wild is illegal, spreads disease to wild tortoises, and displaces resident tortoises.

DO NOT BREED CAPTIVE DESERT TORTOISES

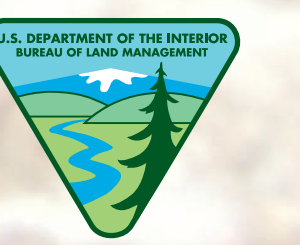
Backyard breeding hurts conservation efforts and produces an overabundance of unwanted captive tortoises.

STAY ON TRAILS

Hike and ride responsibly to avoid crushing tortoise burrows, degrading tortoise habitat, and causing injury or death to a tortoise.

OBSERVE, BUT AVOID CONTACT

Do not pick up a wild desert tortoise. If a tortoise is in danger of being hit by a car, gently lift it up and place it out of harm's way, facing the same direction it was heading.



If you are interested in adopting a desert tortoise or can no longer care for your captive desert tortoise, visit Southwest Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation at www.swparc.org/desert-tortoise

Desert tortoises are 15–20 years old before they can reproduce. • Desert tortoises live long, solitary lives, spending up to 95 percent of their lives in shelters. • Female desert tortoises can store sperm for more than five years. • Captive desert tortoises must not be allowed to breed because the captive population is too large already.

Desert tortoises are protected by law throughout their range. • Desert tortoises can go a year without drinking by storing water in their bladder. • Desert tortoise shelters are used by lizards, snakes, rodents and numerous insects.

Sonoran desert tortoises mostly live on rocky hillsides, and use desert flats and washes as dispersal corridors. • Mohave desert tortoises mostly live on gentle slopes with creosotebush, and often dig their burrows in the open.

PHOTO BY PAUL CONDON

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